HISTORY OR HERITAGE

What's in a name?

The Brampton Historical Society, a child born of ageing and tired heritage endeavours rushes to meet the needs of its hometown. The BHS hangs a tapestry of tales for Bramptonians to touch and feel. A city recalls its days of floods and roses. The BHS tries to breathe life into a long-ago village and town that faced struggle and challenge.

BHS programs and publications add substance to the tangible reminders of wispy yesterdays. Hand-me-down stories, documentaries and pictures teeter-totter generations that yawned through old grey geography books and memorised dates and treaties.

The tug of war for Alder Lea - a landscape marker from our past - hammers home history and heritage to Brampton. The meanings of the two words are clouded, shrouded by the very event uniting them.

The Alder Lea article in this edition was written from an historical perspective for Community Heritage Ontario News and gives the recent history of a heritage matter.

Dictionaries distinguish between history and heritage. History is the chronological record, an explanation of significant past events. On the other hand, heritage is what is inherited from the past. The words are similar terms, not synonyms.

As an historical society, the BHS mandate is not to save buildings: that job belongs to the Brampton Heritage Board (which is funded by The City). We at the Brampton Historical Society do - from time to time - speak out on heritage issues. This is because the heritage around us is proof of the history that lies behind it. While we hope to conserve what we have from our past, we attempt to show the "who, what, when, why, where" of how we have it.

Breaking new ground means chopping down trees of indifference and clearing the clutter of conflict.

Semantics aside, history can be fun. Buffy's Corner serves up historical delicacies for your heritage repast (pun intended) as a matter of good taste.

Come splash with Albert Post in the old Brampton swimming holes; play tag with Fred Kee around Westervelt's Corners and hide-and-seek around your home with Diane Allengame-Kuster.

After all is said and done, history gives heritage a reason for being, linguistically speaking anyway.

BUFFY

Buffy's Corner

The official newsletter of the Brampton Historical Society
Conserve, Educate and Celebrate Brampton's History

Volume 3, No. 2..... June 2001

Buffy's Corners, the original name of Brampton, was the site of the respectable tavern owned by William Buffy, considered to be the father of Brampton. His pioneer spirit (pun intended) lives on in the name of our journal. History "buffs" are invited into The Corner to share their stories and comments.

In This Issue:

To Be or Not To Be
Ye Old Swimming Holes
Westervelt's Corners
Home Improvement Throughout the Years

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Brampton *Hysterical* Society Joke-of-the-Month

A census-taker doing rounds, door-to-door inquired of the resident, "What is the death rate in this area?" The earnest reply was, "I believe it's one per person."

Buffy's Corner, published 4 times per year, is free to BHS members (see back page for membership details)

Buffy's Corner, Copyright 2001

Printed by Peel Graphics Inc., 10 John St. Brampton

All Aboard

William Borosiuk
Sandra Chapman
Steve Collie & Family
George Deshpande
Nisha Deshpande
Barbara Good
Gordon Good
Bert Hogg
Nind Hogg
Hawley Johnston
Richard MacFarlane
Molly McGuckin
Joanne McNicol
Merle Middlebrook
Victor Nidd
Bob Osbourne
Irene Osbourne
Val Powell

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Heather Gunter

The weather in May has been very pleasant, not like past years and has given us motivation to get the City Clock, atop O'Malleys, working. The City Clock is well on its way to finally being on time. Ben Madill agreed to check it out and has the magic touch. When it is wound regularly, it runs well.

The excellent BHS programmes are of great interest and have led to good attendance, which in turn brings in new members.

After our presentations, members and visitors enjoy refreshments, particularly the sweets created by Kay Drew with the help of Joan Hutchins, faithful BHS members.

Everyone is looking forward to our Brampton Walking Tour on June 9, led by Steve Collie.

As Chair of the Map Steering Committee, I would like to thank the committee members, who worked hard on the application for funding to the Trillium Foundation and who continued to oversee the restoration process of the 1857 Map of Brampton. Bob Crawford, Gerry Clarkson, Arthur Alder, Diane Allengame-Kuster, Colin Baker, Michael Avis, Peter Murphy, Dorothy Willis and myself met regularly for about a year and a half. The public is invited to view the restored map at the Peel Heritage Complex. We at the BHS are proud of our first major project.

This historical truth came from a released hostage:

"We are like tea bags. We don't know our own strength until we get into hot water."

HOLY SMOKE

Michael Avis Chair Architecture

The wail of sirens filled downtown on March 24th. Fire erupted in the 128-year old First Baptist Church which firefighters fought furiously for hours to save. Mayor Susan Fennell, Regional Councillor Susan DiMarco and MPP Tony Clement were quickly on the scene to offer comfort and support to the congregation.

The cause of the fire was attributed to an electrical malfunction in the baptismal pool heater. The ageing interior timbers, ranks of pipe organ pipes and antique church fittings ignited like kindling. At the height of the blaze, flames shot spectacularly through the roof of this venerable old structure.

Examining the ruins did not generate a mood of optimism amongst church officials. But a careful inspection by engineers determined that the exterior walls were, miraculously, still sound and the building could be restored, welcomed good news for the parishioners and Bramptonians.

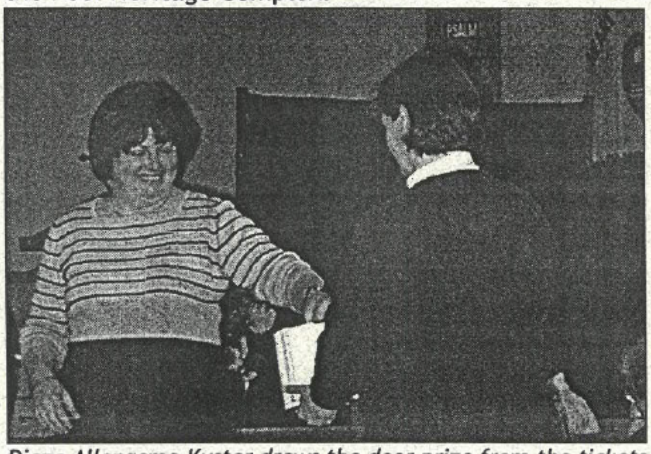
The church is an integral part of the downtown heritage streetscape, linking the 1867 Peel County Court House and 1885 St. Paul's United. It overlooks the Cenotaph, timeless Gage Park and the imposing mansion 'Alder Lea', home of Kenneth Chisholm, who made available the land for the church site.

First Baptist is listed as an 'A' property on the city's heritage inventory. Such a high ranking denotes a building of significant importance, most worthy of preservation and, ideally, historic designation. It is comforting to know that the church will be restored and resume its spiritual and historical role.

Note: Restoration is an expensive undertaking. First Baptist and St. Paul's [with its extensive roof repairs] are grateful for any assistance: donation boxes are in the City Hall Atrium. Stop by to drop a loonie or two ... our local heritage deserves it.

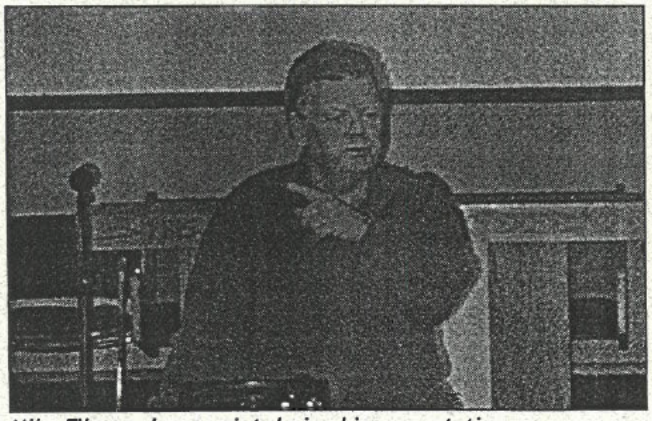
BHS HAPPENINGS: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

March 15, Researching Heritage Homes was presented by **Diane Allengame-Kuster**, Registrar of the Peel Heritage Complex.



Diane Allengame-Kuster draws the door prize from the tickets offered by Janice Smith; despite the "Heritage Home" theme, the door prize was not ... a door.

April 19, "I Remember Sunnyside" with Mike Filey
Popular historian, Mike Filey returned to the BHS with his memories of Sunnyside and set an attendance record of 80 plus for a BHS meeting.



Mike Filey makes a point during his presentation.

Kudos for the BHS Legal Counsel, **Colin Campbell**, who keeps us grounded and on the straight and narrow. On seeing a draft of the last newsletter, where we got - ahem - slightly passionate about the events at Alder Lea, Colin helped us with the background of the story, which resulted in re-working some of the material, so that we could present a better product for the members of the BHS.

BHS CONTACTS

President, Heather Gunter .....
Vice President, Michael Avis .....
Recording Secretary, Janice Smith .....
Corresponding Secretary, Peter Murphy ....
Membership, Colin Baker .....
Newsletter, Dorothy Willis .....

MAP HOMECOMING

The BHS is pleased to announce the safe arrival of **The Map**, the 1857 Plan of the Town of Brampton. Stabilised, restored to original freshness and framed by **Dorset Inc.** the map is receiving TLC at the Peel Heritage Complex.

Having undergone a dramatic transformation since its rescue from a Toronto dumpster by **Christopher Sexton**, the BHS pride and joy rests comfortably within museum confines with familiar contemporary artefacts that require a safe haven from modern contamination.

On view to the public, The Map enjoys cooing but cuddling is forbidden due to its fragile nature, size and security-blanket frame.

Preview of the geographical seeds of Brampton, as revealed by The Map, guarantees historic returns.

The BHS Map Steering Committee thanks all those who were involved with our first project, particularly Christopher Sexton, **Ontario Trillium Foundation**, Dorset Inc., **See Spot Run**, and the **Peel Heritage Complex**.

MAP-MEISTER TRACKS THE MAP'S JOURNEY

Art Alder

When the BHS accepted this map as a donation, no one was aware of the rarity and significance of it. It could not be located in any archive or museum. It was not listed in the directory of early maps.

The map is significant for its depiction of the Etobicoke River that ran under the Cenotaph in the city hall square, under and behind many of the downtown stores. The original river course was changed when the diversion channel was opened in 1952, just in time for Hurricane Hazel in 1954.

The map shows the river as it was and it also includes the Grand Trunk rail line and station. The map shows Brampton in its first stages of development.

When the BHS accepted the map, there was no intention to restore or publish it. However, after its rarity and significance was established, the Trillium Foundation was contacted. With their grant, it was decided to stabilise and restore the map, as well as eliminate three bad stains and remove some of the aged varnish and replace the cotton backing.

The **original map is the property of the BHS** and is on loan to the Peel Heritage Museum in return for displaying and caring for it. Negotiations have been started with Peel Graphics to publish poster prints of the map on their new 5-colour press in Brampton.

REMINISCIN' ABOUT PAUL HUNT

Dorothy "Buffy" Willis

I first met Paul Hunt on Thursday October 1, 1998, in the Court House at the Peel Heritage Complex with almost forty people.

Paul had a dream and wanted others to hear about it. He wanted to discuss "the rapid depletion of historical buildings in Brampton and possible solutions to the wanton destruction of our heritage".

Since then I have learned Paul dreams a lot. He makes plans and Won't-Let-Go. People respect that about him, especially city councillors. He has clout, a following of like-minded folks and doesn't mince words. His knack of prodding politicians by quoting their once-recorded words is his secret weapon, a frankly disarming one. Paul comes across honest; politicians and developers sit up and listen.

A visionary takes aim. Paul pumps style and guts into his dreams. And makes a difference.

In his own words (which originally appeared in the September, 2000 edition of Buffy's Corner):

> After *spending years serving on the Brampton Heritage Board (LACAC) and watching pleas for the preservation of the CPR station and other heritage properties falling on deaf ears - at both the council and staff levels of city government - Mike Seaman and I decided to try and change things.*
>
> *We felt that a group formed outside the bureaucracy of the city government would have a stronger voice in the community, and would be able to apply more pressure to save some of these Heritage properties from the wrecker's ball. From that humble beginning, the Brampton Historical Society was formed.*
>
> *There were slightly less than 40 people at that meeting, but their fervour and enthusiasm was evident from the beginning. Rowena Cooper spoke to the group, outlining the necessary steps to start such an organization. After her remarks, the meeting was opened for discussion, questions etc. The input from the audience was tremendous. We were supposed to vacate the premises by 9 p.m. but we were late. As a matter of fact, we were late on every one of the preliminary meetings we had. We were able, however, to draft a constitution, vote in an executive, collect dues, and put some money in the bank. The BHS baby was up and crawling. Walking was soon to come.*
>
> *A very active committee was formed to plan events for the following year, and it did an admirable job. Things kicked off with our first speaker, Ron Brown. He spoke to a nearly full house in the theatre at the Loafer's Lake library. By the end of our first year of events, we had a paid up membership of 100 households. The turnout to our monthly meetings was excellent, and everyone enjoyed the walking tours and speakers that had been planned. We applied to The Ontario Historical Society for an 'Associate Membership', which was granted.*

Paul's "baby", the BHS matured. A vanguard of heritage, it is a respected charitable organisation that undertakes historical projects such as the restoration of the 1857 Map of the Town of Brampton. Paul founded a society with a vision and voice, and inspired us all to work with that Hunt determination.

Paul Hunt, who defined change for Brampton, makes a change for himself. Recently retired, he and his wife Doreen sold their century home on Murray Street and will move to Orillia to sample the outdoor life of golf and skiing sprinkled with - a dash of Mexico.

"There will be someone else to take my place."

"Never, Paul, you stand apart from the rest, a leader of the pack. You deserve a one-of-a kind designation with NO demolition permit."

Paul touched a lot of people that night in October 1998, none more than me.

Paul Hunt, - avec ses copines Buffy et Bunny - fait le tirage avant le premier spectacle de la Société Brampton Historique, en 1999.
Photo des archives SBH

"AU REVOIR", NOT "ADIEU"

Paul Hunt

Mission Accomplished!!! BHS Founder Paul Hunt and Past President Michael Seaman shake hands on a job well done.

I guess if I were really "cool" and "tuned in", I could tell you the last 2½ years have been a blast. The nearest thing that I can come is "very rewarding". The accomplishments of the BHS over this period have exceeded any of our expectations for such a short period. Congratulations and a huge thank you to all of those who have freely given of their time and expertise to put this show on the road.

As I leave Brampton, it's with a heavy heart since I know I will miss the associations and friendships that have been nurtured during this period. I would like to urge everyone to greater things that I know can be done with such a talented group. When one member leaves, there are always others to take up the slack. This message is to urge those who have maybe thought of helping out but the "time wasn't right" or "I'm too busy now" or "the others can do it better than I", to put away any excuse, and put your shoulder to the wheel.

One of the biggest dangers to any group is "burnout" by any helper or volunteer, committee member, etc. who feels they are overburdened or doing more than their fair share. The annual meeting is in November, but people are needed now. Someone has to replace me as Chair of the Advocacy Committee right away. Step up to the bat! And take a few swings. Remember you have two strikes and three balls (five chances) before you really have to get down to the nitty-gritty. The BHS needs your help. Please volunteer as soon as possible.

As I leave I will be keeping in touch. I will also be watching, with intense interest, the progress and growth of the BHS as it matures.

TAKE A STAND

Take A Stand, a quasi-regular feature, appears whenever pressing issues of historical significance present themselves.

HERITAGE DESIGNATION STUDIES

Bob Crawford

There have been studies conducted to determine financial benefits of heritage designation.

In December of 1998 Dr. Robert Shipley of the University of Waterloo published a Report on Research Concerning Trends in Property Values of Designated Heritage Properties in Several Ontario Communities. The study examined 2707 properties in 24 different communities. Some of his conclusions were:

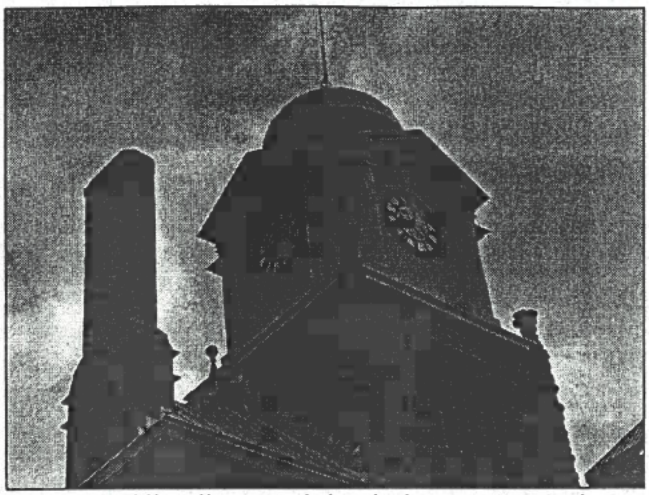
- 74% of designated properties performed better than average when compared to the average property value trend in their communities.
- Designated properties tended to resist downturns in the ambient market.
- In Kitchener, value history trends were 60 percent above the community average.

Dr. Michael Lahr of Rutgers University conducted a closely controlled study of three district Texan cities and found that buildings in a designated district were valued at 6 - 20 percent higher than comparable non-designated district buildings.

A study by the New Jersey Historic Trust in 1998 found that heritage travellers spend 60 percent more than general travellers on a daily basis. They also found that a direct expenditure of $123 million on restoration property translated, due to the trickle-down effect, into a $526 million boost to the economy - a healthy payback in terms of jobs, income, taxes and wealth.

Every community has individuals who don't want change, even if it benefits them. I'm puzzled by people who feel heritage designation is a death wish.

WATCHING THE DOMINION CLOCK



Big Ben Madill walks around the clock to get it going!

SURMISING SIX SEASONAL SESSSIONS

May 17, Restoring Heritage Homes with George **Duncan**, Heritage Co-ordinator of the Town of Richmond Hill, who is a well-known author, artist and expert on **Ontario's** early architecture. His recent project, "York County Mouldings from Historic Interiors 1820 - 1920" will soon be published by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. Look for an article by George Duncan in our next newsletter.

June 9, Walking Tour of Brampton - Part 1
Tour guide Stompin' **Steve Collie** gives us a sole-searching tour of historical downtown Brampton, everything from the well-heeled to the downtrodden. The tour begins at 1:00 p.m. at Brampton City Hall.

September 20, "Show and Tell" BHS members are invited to share their treasures from Brampton's past. For more info. and advance booking, please contact a member of the BHS executive.

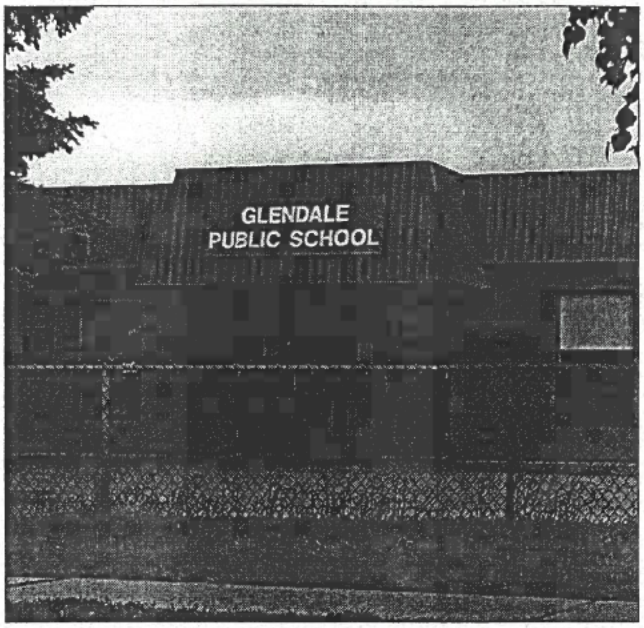
October 13, Walking Tour of Brampton - Part 2
Tour guide Stompin' Steve Collie gives an encore sole-searching tour of historical downtown Brampton.

October 18, Every Quilt Tells a Story
Cathy Willoughby through her Trunk Show will piece together a perspective of quilting from mid 1800's to modern times. A quilter for thirty years, Cathy is past president and present member of **the Brampton Quilters' Guild**. Her antique and twentieth century samples will keep us in stitches in a quilty sort of pun-filled evening.

November 15, Speaker TBA
And, back by popular demand (and the demand of the **Ontario Historical Society** affiliate bylaws), our Annual General meeting!

Glendale Public School 50th Anniversary

Saturday September 15 from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. of one of Brampton's earliest schools marks a celebration. **Friends of Glendale** are invited to enjoy the school displays (covering five decades), the naturalised playground, musical interludes, a barbecue with old-fashioned prices, and to purchase Glendale souvenirs. Afterwards the festivities will continue at the Canadian Legion, 40 Elizabeth Street South.



The school, at 35 Sunset Blvd. was built after Central and McHugh Schools, when Brampton stretched with its post-war student boom. It was located on the north west fringe of the town in the fifties.

More info: 905. 451.2463

www.peel.edu.on.ca/glendale

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Historic Bovaird House

'Brampton in Bloom' Garden Tour/Plant Sale
Sunday, June 10, 10:00 a.m.- 4 p.m.

SE corner Kennedy Road and Bovaird Drive, Brampton
Info: 905.874.2804, bovairdhouse@hotmail.com

Halton - Peel Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society

"Preserving Our Family Heirlooms" with speaker **Sharon Hibbert** of Creative Memories
Sunday, June 3, 2:00 p.m.
Chinguacousy Branch - Brampton Public Library
150 Central Park Drive, Brampton
Info: call **Dorothy Kew,** [redacted]

Cemetery Recording Day
June 24, 2001, 9 a.m. (NO RAIN DATE!)
Trafalgar Lawn Cemetery, Oakville
(North side of Highway 5 (Dundas Street) just west of Neyagawa Blvd. at the 16 Mile Creek)

Friends of the Schoolhouse

Queen Victoria Fête
Spend a day at the schoolhouse and celebrate our past.
Saturday, May 26, 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Strawberry Social
Join your friends in the Atrium for a fun lunch hour.
Tuesday, June 26, 11:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.

Visit the Schoolhouse
On the 2nd Sunday of every month the Old Britannia Schoolhouse will be open from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Info: [redacted]

Esquesing Historical Society

Historic Georgetown Homes
J. Mark Rowe will lead a walking tour of the Market, Park, Charles and Church Street areas of Georgetown. Join us for a pot luck dinner first. Bring your own cutlery and dishes. Coffee and tea will be available.
Wed., June 13, 2001; dinner: 6:00 p.m., tour: 7:00 p.m.
Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown.

Acton Cemetery Tour
Sherry Westfahl gives a walking tour of Fairview Cemetery.
Wednesday, September 12, 2001, 7:00 p.m.
Fairview Cemetery, Cobblehill Road, Acton.
Please note that the Fairview Cemetery has several hills. Meet at the chapel just inside the front gates. There will NOT be refreshments available after this meeting. Note the early start time!

Milton Historical Society

A Walking Tour of Downtown Milton
Jim Dills presents the town named after the Poet.
Thursday, May 17
Coffee at 7:30 p.m.; presentation at 8:00 p.m.
Hugh Foster Hall (next to the Town Hall)

MHS Annual Garage Sale
Saturday, June 2, 2001
Sale goes from dawn tlll "all gone"
St. Paul's United Church

Streetsville Historical Society

STREETSVILLE FOUNDERS BREAD AND HONEY FESTIVAL
June 1-3, 2001

Candlelight Walk
Friday June 1, 2001, 8:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Tour starts at Red Hill Art Glass, 271 Queen St. S.

Parade
Saturday June 2, 2001, 10:00 a.m.

Info: 905.816.1640
Or go to the nifty website at www.breadandhoney.com

Walking Tours of Historic Streetsville
Saturday July 14, 2001, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Tour starts at Red Hill Art Glass, 271 Queen St. S.

Did you renew your membership for 2001? It's easy!! Just send us the form on page 12.

PEEL GRAPHICS INC.
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General Printers Since 1933

Buffy's Corner is printed thanks to the generosity of Peel Graphics Inc.

BHS Meetings every third Thursday, 7:15 p.m.
Heart Lake Presbyterian Church
25 Ruth Street, Brampton
Admission free to members, others: $5

The state has no place in the historical rooms of the nation.
Buffy E. Trudeau

ALDER LEA: TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Originally written by Dorothy Willis for the CHO News.

To be or not to be - the question marks the building that overlooks Gage Park in Downtown Brampton. Originally Alder Lea, or the Kenneth Chisholm Estate, now Royal Canadian Legion Branch 15, its very name conjures contrast and controversy for a city slowly awakening to the sad depletion of its once-glorious heritage.

On April 2, 2001, the Ontario Conservation Review Board held a hearing to determine the recommendation of heritage designation of the property to the City of Brampton.

It was on August 11, 1999, after study and consultation, that City Council passed Resolution PB201-99 to implement a municipal heritage preservation strategy with eight components.

Designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* without consent of the owner is appropriate when a significant building is considered threatened since it provides some protection (Part IV of the *Act)*. It attempts to ensure that changes to a building respect the importance of the heritage resource. But it can only delay demolition for a maximum of 270 days.

On September 11, 2000, the Brampton Council passed Resolution PB220-2000 to serve "Notice Of Intention To Designate" on the property owner, Legion Branch 15, and the Ontario Heritage Foundation. It was the first step in an unprecedented move to deal with the highest-ranking building on the Brampton Inventory of Heritage Resources.

Alder Lea, converted to a non-residential use, was not covered under the City's Demolition Control By-law. In accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*, Council notified the public through the *Brampton Guardian* of its intent to designate the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 15, 40 Elizabeth Street South, "a property of historic, architectural and contextual significance" on September 15, 2000. This publication gave the building the same protection as a designation.

The City received two objections to its proposed designation: one from a resident of Elizabeth Street South, the other from the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 15. The property was for sale and the Legion's objection stated, "it is our belief that this designation would impose upon the Branch and its members a significant and undue penalty through the devaluation of the property."

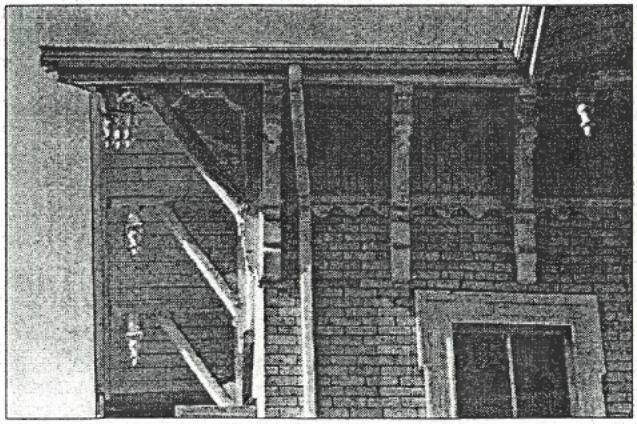
The objections prevented Council from passing a By-law to designate the property so the matter was referred to the Conservation Review Board, the body appointed by the Ontario Government to advise on heritage matters.

The *Brampton Guardian's* Pam Douglas disclosed on February 28, 2001 that a local developer had made a conditional offer to purchase the Legion and its one and a third acres. In her article, "Legion Fighting City's Attempts At Designation", Douglas quoted Andrin Limited President, Peter Smith, "I'm a developer and I'm a builder. I'm not a preserver of historic buildings". He conceded certain historical and architectural "things" could be "reused".

Then on March 7, the Legion Branch withdrew its objection. "While we continue to have concerns regarding the timing and process of the designation, as well as the potential impact of the designation on the property's value, we recognise that to continue with our objection would serve no purpose but to extend the process unnecessarily."

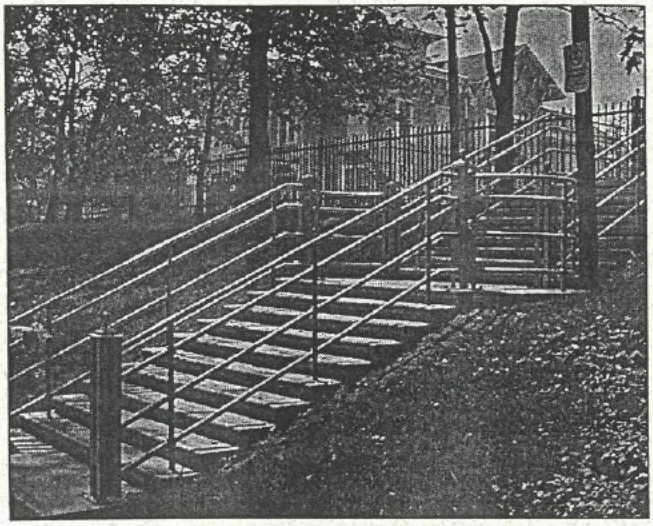
After purchasing Alder Lea in 1944, the Legion altered and added to the building, notably the Memorial Hall on the south side. David Stone in his Report on the Chisholm House, @ 1977 for the Brampton L.A.C.A.C. stated, "the structure is, however, of such excellent design and workmanship that it is able to absorb abuse without irreparable injury".

For over 50 years Legion members have maintained the exterior of the Italianate-style building and attempted to preserve fine details. Under the shallow hip roof projecting eaves are supported on large but delicate brackets; each finished with a turned drop-pendant. Under the eaves two-and-a-half feet of vertical boarding with a lower, scalloped border trim is visible.

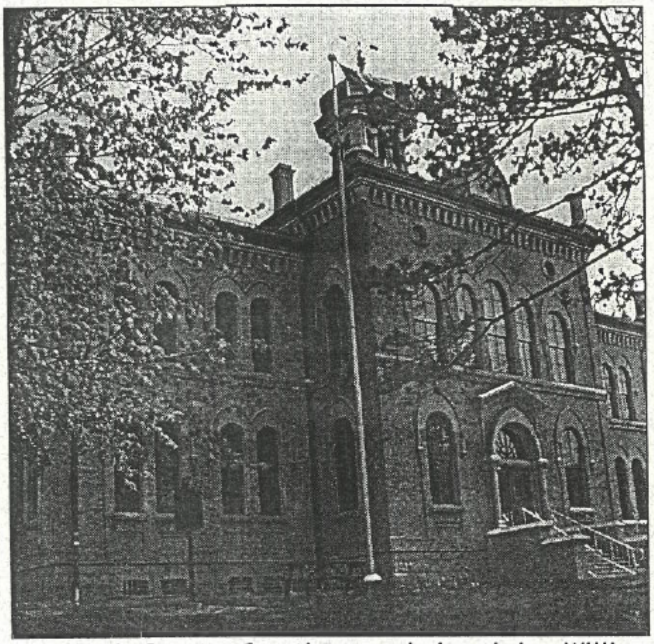


Eaves dropping at Alder Lea: the turned drop-pendants

The Legion's west entrance is parked on black asphalt and poses un-historically to passers-by. Only a westward gaze up terraced lawns from Gage Park or a visit inside hints of its heritage integrity.



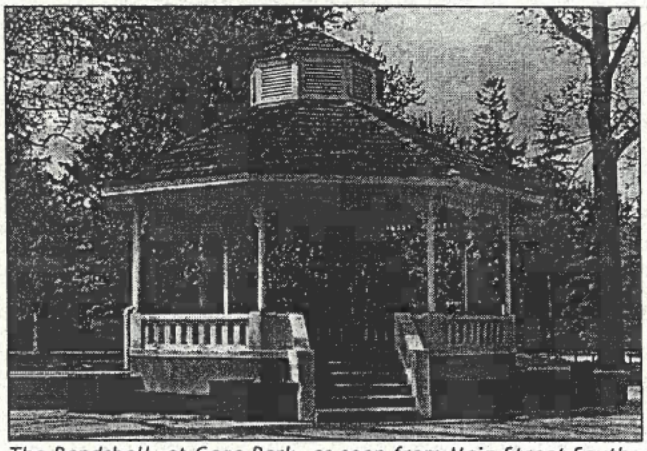
Etched in the bevelled glass lit by a transom light inside the east entrance are the words "Alder Lea", but the name "Kenneth Chisholm Estate" more truly authenticates Brampton's origins.



The Peel County Courthouse, designed by William Kaufman, possibly the same architect who designed Alder Lea.

In 1863 and 1864 Chisholm purchased two lots, about four acres of land between Elizabeth Street and Main Street for about 280 pounds from John Elliott, his father-in-law and Brampton pioneer. The 1871 Census of Ontario lists the Chisholm family as residents of Alder Lea and the Historical Atlas of Peel County 1877 presents a sketch of their grand estate that reflects the stature and renown of the owner himself.

It is believed that William Kaufman, architect of the Peel County Court House and Jail, designed Kenneth Chisholm's mansion, the first in town built of expensive buff-coloured brick and trimmed with white woodwork. Today the dignified residence tucks itself integrally into the architecturally historic conclave that includes the Peel Heritage Complex on Wellington Street as well as the Brampton City Hall where it preserves small town ambiance.



The Bandshell, at Gage Park, as seen from Main Street South

Kenneth Chisholm: Founding Father of Brampton

While Alder Lea's landscape and location is architecturally and contextually unique, her legacy lies in the history of "founding father" Kenneth Chisholm.

Kenneth Chisholm (1829-1906) was born in Toronto Township of Scottish Catholic parentage, United Empire Loyalists. He apprenticed as a clerk then opened his Brampton business with brother-in-law Matthew Elliott.

Chisholm soon controlled the largest business - general merchandise, grain and produce - in Peel County. His Brampton enterprise, along with with an Orangeville operation, exceeded one half million (dollars) yearly as recorded in the Historical Atlas of Peel County 1877. He also controlled the mills at Eldorado and the quarries at the Credit Forks. He raised Brampton from its struggling roots to County Town of Peel.

Highly respected, Chisholm pursued his early ambition of a career in public life. To his contemporaries Chisholm was "a vigorous resourceful fighter but a vigorous, warm-hearted man, he had few, if any, personal enemies, and in

the days of his activity enjoyed the confidence of the people of Peel to perhaps a greater extent than any other man". (*The Conservator, September 26, 1906)*

Kenneth Chisholm: Bramptonian-at-large
Photo Credit: 1877 Peel Atlas.

Chisholm entered politics in 1866 as a council member of the Village of Brampton and one year later was elected as first Reeve of Brampton, a position he held for eleven years. For three years he was also Warden of the County of Peel. In 1873 he resigned as postmaster of Brampton to represent Peel as a Liberal MPP until 1892, when he was appointed Registrar of Peel.

In his lifetime Kenneth Chisholm served as a Director of the Central Bank of Canada and Vice-President of the Haggert Manufacturing Company. A community benefactor, he organised the Brampton Board of Trade, donated to Brampton its Town Hall (later "Orange Hall"), the site for the First Baptist Church and the stone for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

During the 1890's depression, the grounds of Alder Lea and the adjacent Elliott Estate were put up for sale. Aware of the property's significance progressive townsfolk campaigned to acquire it for a park. They asked citizens to donate ten dollars towards buying trees to plant on the land. In 1895 philanthropist Sir William Gage, a successful publisher and native of Peel County purchased the land and presented it to Brampton - its first municipal park. The historic tie between Gage Park and Alder Lea is celebrated through the maintaining of Alder Lea's terraces and several original trees.

Side by side: Gage Park and Alder Lea - Kenneth Chisholm and early Brampton.

Today the controversy over the Legion and Alder Lea continues in Brampton, a city of over three hundred thousand people and a mere twenty-nine designated heritage properties. In the last few years demolition-weary Bramptonians have come together - when buildings were razed, their voices were raised. They support the City in its efforts to recognise non-renewable heritage resources. With cautious optimism, they await the recommendations of the Ontario Conservation Review Board and the City's next move.

So we take it that Kenneth Chisholm wasn't on their Christmas card List ...

Fred Mowat, son of Oliver Mowat [Liberal], has been appointed Sheriff of Toronto. It is one of the fattest offices in Ontario. What a howl there would have been in the Liberal camp had a son of Sir John A. Macdonald received such an office, the gift of the Dominion Premier. Now let the Grits shut up forever.

Brampton Conservator, May 6, 1887

Source: Four-Foot Cucumbers, Juvenile Delinquents & Frogs From The Sky! - Snippets of Life in Victorian Canada

OOPS!

A computer glitch locked this edition of BC into Buffy's elderly PC just as the finishing touches were being put on to Your Journal. A heroic rescue of the working copy from a recalcitrant hard drive and subsequent refinishing of the newsletter caused a delay for which we apologise. Our super summer special is behind the times with dates. We promise to "get with the program" for September!

Or October at the latest.

YE OLD SWIMMING HOLES

Albert L. Post

It is hard to imagine where we kids swam during the hot summers in the thirties and the forties. Brampton did have a public swimming pool at Rosalea Park on Union Street, which opened in 1937, I believe, and was financed at least in part by the Brampton Lions Club. This pool was open only in the summer months and included a deep pool for adults and a shallow wading pool for children and others who could not swim. There was a fairly large change room. The present YMCA is now located on the site.

It seemed difficult for people to learn to swim back then. I don't recall any swimming instruction or groups that offered swimming lessons until the fifties. Most young people never learned to swim in towns and other communities where there was not a body of natural water like a lake close by.

There were swimming holes for sure in the Etobicoke Creek, the Credit River and in a couple of ponds. I have no idea how polluted these swimming holes were but my guess is they are much cleaner today.

To those of us on the north side of town the popular swimming holes were on Fleury's farm and behind the Brampton Brickyard in the Etobicoke. The long driveway to Fleury's farm ran east off Main Street North about where Williams Parkway is today. Where the lane crossed the creek there was a neat concrete bridge that always had numerous tangles of fishing line around the hydro wires that followed the lane to the farm buildings. There were two or three specific spots along the creek where the water would reach a depth of about five feet.

A little farther north was for big time swimmers; the young adults who had a car and others who ventured that far on a bicycle. I'm referring to a spot on present day Bovaird Drive at the same creek where the water was much deeper, probably seven or eight feet. The bridge was one of those trussed structures with a high upper frame, fairly common throughout the countryside. The bridge provided the challenge to young lads to dive off the top while some brave girls jumped and screamed all the way down.

South of Vodden Street the Dale Estate had built a dam in the Etobicoke, probably to provide a larger source of water for watering their forty acres of greenhouses. The "Dales Dam" location was more of a fishing hole. I presume the dam has long since been demolished.

Dick Smith's pond was located south of the C.N.R. tracks and slightly west of Centre Street. It was created by excavating for clay to supply an early Brampton Brick Works, operated by the Packham family. Apparently this was a good swimming hole. It was eventually filled in when turned into a land fill site. About the time the river diversion was put through that area this pond and land fill site disappeared.

Fletcher's pond was located at the C.N.R. tracks where the creek of the same name passed under just east of McLaughlin Road. I'm not sure how this pond was created. It didn't seem to be entirely natural and may have been the result of scraping for earth to build the fairly high railway embankment that went through there. The Fletcher family is recorded on early maps as the owners of the farm east of McLaughlin Road where the C.N.R. tracks intersect.

For others who wanted to be more adventurous, you could go over to Snell's Lake (now Heart Lake) or even Huttonville Dam on the Credit River. Huttonville Dam was pretty intimidating to a young lad with its rushing and seemingly deep water. Fred Kee's book on Huttonville: From Wolf's Den to Huttonville describes the area in more detail.

The majestic Credit River at Embleton Road in Huttonville.

Many times a few of us would venture on our bicycles over to the fifth line west, north of Embleton Road for a really good swim in the Credit. This was always a severe task for me to swim across the river, under the old steel bridge to the other side, usually among the cows who were there to accompany you.

WE GOT MAIL!

Just received your excellent Buffy's Corner today! Another wonderful edition packed full of news and history. I much appreciate your notice of my January presentation and the photos are great too. Your efforts are valuable to the community of residents and history buffs.

Sincerely,
Richard MacFarlane

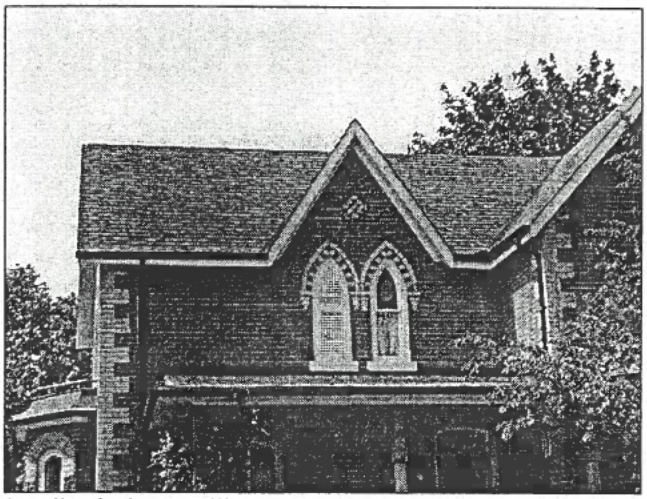
HOME IMPROVEMENT OVER THE YEARS

Diane Allengame-Kuster

Even in the humblest of log cabins there was a woman saying, "a window would be so lovely" and a man thinking "that's another improvement I can't afford". The very improvements that people longingly saved up for and proudly installed now make our job of dating buildings rather difficult.

Recognising elements of architectural styles is usually the first step in uncovering a building's history - for this you'll need to take a trip to the library. Ontario Architecture: A guide to Styles and Building terms 1784 to the present by John Blumenson is a wonderful reference book. There are numerous web sites with architectural style guides but nothing compares to Blumenson's work, particularly for this part of Ontario.

Next, take a critical look at your house. Do you see any of the elements described as being representative of a certain period in time? If the ends of the eaves return in towards the gable, for example, your house was likely built around 1850. The size of window openings changed over the years, as did the pitch of the roof (the latter generally becoming steeper as time went by).



Details of a house will gives clues to its year of construction.

Note the size and shape of window openings. The windows themselves may have been replaced, but note if the window openings are square or rounded. Note the placement of main entrance and stairs, if any. Is the brick veneer or solid brick? Can you see a pattern in bricklaying? What are the window sills made of?

Examine the foundation and note if it is rubble stone or poured concrete? Concrete, used for foundations, porch pillars and window sills almost always suggests a turn of the century or later date of construction.

Finally take a look at your neighbours' houses. Is your house notably different? If so it may be older, or younger than the other houses. If you see a "twin" house to yours somewhere else in the community, consider talking to the owner to see if they know how old it is. Often builders used the same plans to build a number of homes in the same time period.

Next, gather your house detective kit: a copy of the deed or tax bill showing legal description (different from the street address and should contain a lot number and plan number), assessment notice, a copy of the title search showing the last several owners, photographs of the house from all sides and your notes.

Next, bring your house detective kit and at least 2 hours of spare time to the Archives at the Peel Heritage Complex!

Here's what we won't have for your house:

- A file folder of information on the former owners including juicy gossip
- A photograph of your house on the day it was completed
- Plans of your plumbing
- Ideas for redecorating

The only complete set of records that really shed any light on when a house was built are the Land and Property records. To understand the records it helps to have a basic understanding of how Brampton developed. The town site was originally four 100-acre lots, each identified with a number and a concession reference. It didn't take long, however, before smaller lots were created, and soon plans of subdivision were registered, all bearing lot numbers unique to the plan.

The records are arranged by lot and plan and just to be confusing, often reference the original 100-acre lot numbers as well. Some plans were known by the name of the person registering the subdivision, such as the Wright Plan. All have number titles such as BR2, which stands for Registered Plan of subdivision Brampton #2. You must determine your lot and plan number before you can access the Land and Property records.

At the Archives we can tell you when your BR plan was registered. Usually a house did not pre-date the subdivision unless it was the original house on the large parcel of land.

Once you've determined your lot and plan number, you will work with the Abstract Indexes. They are arranged by lot and plan somewhat in chronological order. Please make sure you leave yourself lots of time to examine these records. The thread of continuity is often tenuous! As you look at the records for your particular lot and plan you will find references to bargain and sales, mortgages, wills and other legal

terms. For every document you find indexed, there will be a corresponding full length document that will fully outline the terms of the sale or mortgage or will.

The key to using the Abstract Index to determine the date of construction is in locating changes in property value and mortgages. Much as we do today, early residents often borrowed money to finance major home improvements and building projects.

Other sources of information on early buildings include maps. The newly restored 1857 map of Brampton will be a great help in this regard because of its large scale and detail. The fire insurance plans, drawn at the turn of the century and again in 1940 show every structure in the town, and indicate its composition and number of stories. Our extensive photographic collection may help. We have a number of images of Brampton streets and buildings.

Higgins House ... in the middle of the street. The Main one, north of Queen, that is.
Photo courtesy of the Peel Archives

Once you know some of the names of people who lived in your house, you might wish to flesh out the skeletons by learning a bit more about them. The census returns, completed every ten years and available from 1851 through 1901, give us a wealth of information on early families including ages, religion, occupation, full names, place of birth, and in the case of the 1851 and 1861 census returns, the kind of dwelling. This can be an important clue if you have a really vintage house. From there you might want to look at cemetery listings, or newspaper birth death and marriage notices to learn a little more. Early directories will list occupations and carry advertising. And it never hurts to refresh your memory with some general Brampton history. Understanding how your community has grown can be really helpful - look at the effect of the Dale estate, for example, on housing in the Main and Vodden area.

If you don't live in an old house, take a walk in an older neighbourhood and really look at the details on the houses you see. When you travel, look for regional similarities and differences.

If you do have an old house, try to date it at least to a decade or date range. Finding out about your home's past can guide sensitive renovations, restorations or landscape improvements. If nothing else you will have an increased appreciation for the four walls that shelter you and your family.

KID'S EYE VIEW

Thomas Hipkin

Today I took a trip to the 1900's in the Peel Heritage Complex. There was a lot to see and do for example the Art Gallery. There were lots of sculptures and paintings with beautiful colours. In the Archives I saw pictures and information about the English people who sailed to Canada.

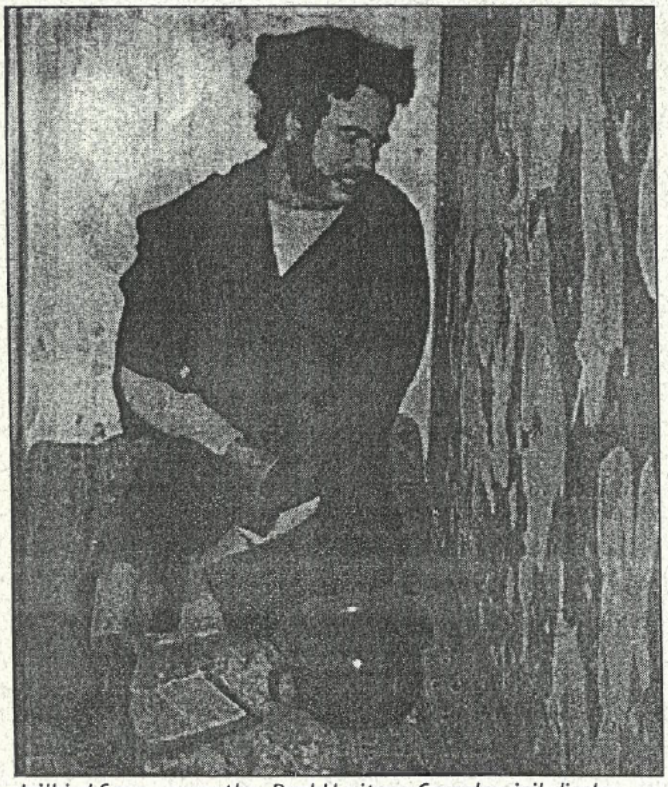
But don't miss the jail with Sean as a prisoner. Go right inside his cell and read the messages. Up to five people would be in his cell. The museum has displays of old tools that people used to use in their jobs. Also in the museum is the brain cell where kids can learn.

Don't you wish you could have a kid's eye view of the Peel Heritage Complex?

P.S. What does a knight like to draw most?

His sword!

Eight-year-old Thomas lives with his family in Toronto.



Jailbird Sean graces the Peel Heritage Complex jail display.

KEE NOTES FROM FRED

By Fred Kee

Westervelt's Corners

Commonly known as "the Junction of 7 & 10".

Recently I was asked, "do you know the history of Westervelt's Corners"?

Well, although I spent most of my first twenty-five years in that neighbourhood, it was always "No. 10" or "the Junction". I grew up there, went to school at S.S. #22 with the residents and was well acquainted with the people who lived there.

Northwest corner of "The Junction" circa 2001.

But for the beginnings, that started more than 100 years before I was born, I went to the archives. At the archives, I found that about 1821, shortly after the county survey, 100-acre lots became available.

The Westervelts and the Fergusons were the first pioneers in that neighbourhood. This happened before Brampton was incorporated as a village in 1853. More about that later. James Westervelt got ownership of the 100 acres at Lot 11 on the north west corner of 7 and 10 highways, while Sam Ferguson got ownership of Lot 12 on the east side of Hurontario Street.

Now it is quite possible that Westervelt began building an inn after clearing the corner of his farm. When completed, this inn - complete with large dining room, kitchen, as well as many bedrooms to rent out - also had added a substantial stable with 2nd-floor storage.

The Junction Garage building, located at the Northeast of the intersection of "7 and 10".

This inn was a major rest stop for travellers from Guelph and Orangeville going south to York (Toronto). It was also the stop for the stage-coach that delivered passengers as well as mail and parcels. It was one of the early taverns, so its popularity was well known. According to the minutes of Chinguacousy council in 1858, there were inspectors of houses of public entertainment who gave great reports on this business.

It appears that after Westervelt built his inn at the junction he probably severed 2 acres and sold the rest, since, by 1935 it was registered in the name of Warren Clarkson. More about this farm later.

In the Lynch directory of 1873, there was mention of three Campbell brothers who ran a smithy. There was an inn, a store, two butchers, a Methodist frame church, and frame shed. The minister, the local teacher, lived there. By 1866 the population was 50.

Much more later...

Application for membership in the **BRAMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY** (bramhis@home.com)

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

Telephone:_____

E mail:_____

Additional Household Members:_____

Signature:_____

☐ I enclose a Household Membership fee of $20 for a full year or $10 for a half year

☐ I wish to enclose an additional donation to the Society of $_____

Please mail cheque or money order to:
Brampton Historical Society
c/o Peter Murphy, [redacted]
American money accepted at par